LITERARY NEWS, VIEWS AND CRITICISM

THREE INTERVIEWS AND ONLY ONE MAN

J. D. Symon Just Another of Those Surprising English Authors.

NOVELIST AND EX-EDITOR

Also a Historian, but Busy Just Now Translating Pindar Into English.

The report was heard that Laurence North, author of an English newspaper novel announced for next week, was in town. The novel is an important one with an interesting theme, so the author was called upon. The report was heard that J. D. Symon, for ten years assistant editor of the *Illustrated London ews*, was in town, and the editor was visited. The report was heard that the author of "The Press and Its Story," an important history now in course of preparation, was in town. And lo! one medium sized, soft voiced, gentle mannered, retiring Englishman answered to all counts. After the recent visit of Arnold Bennett one shouldn't be amazed at these literary Englishmen, but it is rather hard to get used to the variety and the success of their literary activities.

For recreation Mr. Symon—otherwise Mr. North—is now making a complete translation of Pindar into English verse, some of the "Odes" having already appeared in the English review. And he utilizes his spare moments working at a history of the Renaissance on which S. L. Bensusan, the well known authority on art, is collaborating with him. It seems that Mr. Symon will soon have to get yet another pen name.

"'Laurence North' is a family name," he said. "That is, part of it is. I always regretted the circumstances that kept me from receiving the name of my grandfather, Laurence Sinclair, which was originally intended to be mine, and resolved that if ever I required a pseudonym I would use it. But when the time came that I essayed fiction, and it seemed just as well that I should keep my identity as an editor of responsibility in the background, as well as the shameful fact that I translated Greek verse, I found that 'Sinclair' had already been pretty much appropriated. There was May Sinclair and there was Upton Sinclair; so I decided to keep only the 'Laurence' half of my desired pen name and completed it with North. I being a Scotchman and from the North."

Mr. Symon was a little hesitant to talk about the theme of his new novel, which deals with present day London journalism, for the reason that he has been for so many years identified with London journalism. He admits, however, the presence there of sensationalism, such as is pictured in his book, and attributes it to American influence.

"Of course we have never gone to the extreme in sensationalism that you have," he said. "But we have been influenced by you in many ways. The other day when I was in Boston I saw several papers labelled 'Richeson Must Die,' and from all that I could see that was the name of the paper. We haven't gone to quite such an extreme with the scarehead; but we have the scarehead and we get it from America. We have put it to further uses than you. For instance, when J. L. Garvin came to the *Pall Mall* he conceived of telling the story in synopsis by means of the sequence of scareheads, and used it in connection with a political crisis then in development. It was very effective; the scareheads, in chronological order through the five or six critical days, gave the substance of the story."

Mr. Symon insists that "The Golightlys" is but a synthetic study and that it is photographic neither in characters nor in incidents. However, if Newnes, the great English newspaper proprietor, were still alive he might have something to say about the character of Golightly, who in the story ultimately becomes the proprietor of a tremendously influential yellow daily called the *Beacon*. Golightly had been intended by his parents for the ministry in the strict Scripture Christian's sect, but at 16 had become a local reporter, and later went up to London, induced a man to finance a series of half penny shockers for boys which he himself wrote at the rate of one a week, and so started what was to become a rare tree of journalism with many branches, among them *Golightly's Scrap Book*, which bears a strong resemblance to *Tit-Bits*.

The book tells how the scrap book was born. Hiram Adderley, the prosperous cheesemonger, who was backing the budding journalist, felt it incumbent upon himself to live up to his literary connection somehow, so had developed a mania for cutting choice things out of the newspapers and pasting them into a scrap book. He spent whole Sunday afternoons over his treasure, while Penelope Golightly watched him with a reflective eye.

"Listen 'ere, Potty," he said one afternoon, "I calls this really interestin'."

From the scrap book he read unctuously:

"In the Victoria Bridge, Montreal, there are 7,895,239 bolts, 30,000 steel girders and the weight of the entire tubular sections is 3,000,000 tons. The work occupied seven years, and the entire cost was £3,000,000 sterling or £1 per ton. The girders placed end to end would reach half way around the globe.

"Think o' that!"

Potiphar did know of that, and more.

"I say, Hirie," he remarked (Hirie was always his reply to Potty), "we'll print one of your scrap books, properly edited of course, in weekly parts like a magazine. We must have a story in it, but beyond that we needn't pay a red cent for the literary matter."

"We'll call it Golightly's Scrap Book," he added after a pause.

"Adderley's Scrap Book, you mean, Potty."

"No offence, Hirie, but your name won't do. It isn't cheerful enough soundin'. Now mine happens to be the very thing—Golightly. That'll hit the young man at the station off for a holiday. Have you seen *Golightly's* this week? It's stunnin'. You've got the 'l' and the 'y,' anyhow, Hiram."

And with that Hiram had to be content.

Golightly's Scrap Book sounded a new note. The statistical mind of the clerk and the small trader found in it abundance of food. Householders in Tooting and Balham discussed its wisdom over the garden fence in the cool of the evening. "Let me see, now, was it fifty million cabbages that would stretch to the moon or forty-five and a half? I'll just run in for *Golightly's*. 'E's got it all down." Humorous anecdotes, cookery and a love story pleased the householder's womankind. *Golightly's* became a national institution, like the Crystal Palace, the Albert Memorial and Handel's "Messiah." It insured you against battle, murder and sudden death. It was an ever handy calculator. It told you what to do in case of fire, burns, scalds and apoplexy. It supplied you with "A Little Sermon" and the choicest American poetry on the back page. It invited you to compete for untold wealth, for a family vault, a cottage in the country and happy holidays on the Continent. It took its readers to Rome and gave them the run of the Coliseum and the Catacombs; it led them up the Swiss mountains by rail, it sent one fortunate dry goods clerk to Japan, another to Timbuctu and a third to Jericho. The general intelligence of the British public rose by leaps and bounds, its mental horizon, long limited by the back garden, now stretched from China to Peru. Golightly had become the universal provider of information for his fellows. The panting Education Office toiled after him in vain.

And withal to the fortunate proprietors came wealth.

NEW BOOKS.

The Diplomat and the Girl.

We hear the young diplomatist, Lyeff Petrovich, in Henrietta Dana Skinner's story of "Faith Brandon" (D. Appleton and Company), conversing with an older friend, Grigori Sergevich, at the summer hotel in the Crimea. He is explaining why he does not feel the need of being married. We hear him say: "I have known family life at its holiest and best, its affections and companionships and the sorrow of their loss. I feel that those hours of desolation as well as the hours of joy, the prayers at my mother's knee, my father's counsels, aye, and his whippings, too! have all been part of my preparation for the work I hope to do in life. And I am not without present human ties. I have the dear invalid uncle who has been a second father to me; I have my widowed sister and her little ones; I have friends and relatives to whom I am warmly attached. Will not these suffice?" He had a serious and very measured way of speaking.

Just then a third person appeared. Into the broad path flooded by moonlight stepped a young girl, advancing toward them with upraised face—a school maiden with braided hair, whose yellow frock lacked two or three inches of reaching her ankles. The face raised toward them was serious, almost too serious for its wholesome childish contours; the magnificent eyes were grave and deep, the young, undeveloped figure was straight and strong, the noble young head was carried with almost regal dignity."

Many things happened of which we cannot speak, for it would never do to reveal everything that is in a story. We merely indicate a period of trouble when we quote from page 287: "There was a moment's hush, a stillness, breathless, tense. Then without a cry or warning came the sound of a heavy fall. Lyeff Petrovich lay stretched at length upon the floor, white, senseless, motionless." But this was not final, for the story says that "it is a long, slow, uncertain journey back from the land of oblivion," and the meaning of this is plainly that Lyeff came to, though slowly. It was later that Faith, who had been at home in America for a time, sailed from New York to Southampton, and it is on the arrival of the ship and at page 383 that we read: "There, with her rug on his arm and her suitcase at his feet stood a tall, fair man in a long gray raincoat, his soft felt hat pulled well down over his laughing light blue eyes. In an instant his hat was off, his arms were around her, and Faith, with her head against his breast, heard the heavy throbbing of the constant heart of Lyeff Petrovich!" There were sharp complications; the reader will follow them with interest; but so much will show that the young diplomatist was mistaken when he thought that all that he needed for happiness was his work and his memories of relations and friends.

Editor and Crocodile Farmer.

It is declared with much insistence that Anne Moorhouse in Ethel Stefana Stephens's story of "The Lure" (John Lane Company) was thin and coltish, undeveloped and destitute of roundness and dimples at 22, but we know well that what Mr. Henry James would call her young slimness could not have been at this age too young and that she was very good looking and charming. But although at 22 the bones of a girl have had time to be well and gloriously covered she could be a good deal older and still have a wrong impression concerning a man.

Huntly Goss was about 40, and only beginning to be bald. We are willing to believe that he was melodious and handsome. Hyperion, Adonis, Narcissus—there is no reason to doubt that he was like them all, or that he resembled the Gibson pictures. He was ready to prove his culture at any moment with a silver tongue. Did Anne know "a certain Tanagra figurine in the Louvre collection?" It was a girl with draperies, "slender, a little frightened, resolved to be bold, inclined to be pudique, as the French say." Anne reminded him of it—Anne, who had "a certain raideur, a springtime gaucherie." It was a highly moral address that he delivered in an upper room of the Criterion restaurant on "The Attitude of Modern Drama Toward the Family as a Social Unit," but Anne knew very well that the paper he edited, the *Orb*, which purported to be written by duchesses for duchesses, was a humbug because she herself wrote the articles that gave the paper its sublimated character, and all that the duchesses did was to sign their names to them.

Anne also knew that her editor was married, and yet this happened in a cab after the theatre: "Goss with his fine profile and disquieting personality sat beside her, his hand against hers in the shadow of the curtain, moving her soul with unknown forces. It seemed part of the realm of stars and song into which her mood had lifted her when, during the drive home, without speaking a word, he put his arm around her in the first possible empty street and kissed her over and over again on the lips she had refused him so often." He wanted her to go with him to the *Orb* office, which was not open evenings. "I have the key," he whispered. He explained to her that she was intoxicating, that she was sweet, that she was provoking. He said: "I want to kiss you, and kiss you, and kiss you." But Anne, dazzled though she was, was able to resist the editor. We presently find her in Khartum, the devoted wife of Capt. Host of the British army, a much better man.

The *Orb* went to pieces without paying the duchesses for the use of their names; it was really neither by nor for duchesses. When Goss turned up at Khartum he was no longer an editor, but the manager of a great crocodile farming enterprise. His company proposed to furnish all the world's markets with crocodile leather. Strangely enough his invalid wife accompanied him to Africa; also his stepson, who was an idiot. The Gosses and the Hosts went all together far up the White Nile to the crocodile farm. It was in the middle of a dreadful swamp. A shocking deed was planned to be done here.

It was by no accident that Austin, the idiot stepson, lost his pet baby monkey and was shot in the leg as he ran after it through the swamp grasses teeming with poisonous serpents and crocodiles. A crocodile was waiting for him and would have had him if Capt. Host had not knocked the saurian over with an expanding bullet. Austin was in his stepfather's way because of a will. He stood between Goss and a considerable sum of money. Mrs. Goss knew this. It was because she knew it that she watched over the idiot so carefully. But the poor lady could not always be watchful; she was racked by cancer and unconscious with fever when Austin was lured from the boat.

The great wickedness that slumbered in Goss all came out on this White Nile expedition. He drank whiskey without stint in that blazing and parboiling atmosphere. He made love again to Anne. Of course she resented it. "She advanced swiftly white and trembling and struck him full on the mouth. He came forward in an excess of madness and took her into his arms by force, kissing her cheek, her hair, her neck, her shoulder, any part of her struggling form that he could reach. She could smell the whiskey in his breath as she fought with him." But when it came to accounting to Capt. Host the scamp was wonderfully cool. We believe that he will keep the reader interested. It was this author who wrote the vivid Tunisian story called "The Veil."

A Miracle and Some Queernesses.

Mrs. Teversham-Dingle, the chief character in Mr. Horace W. C. Newte's story of "The Ealing Miracle" (John Lane Company), had a great surprise one day. Her rather querulous and portly husband, whom she called Prince because she was a loving wife, was away on business in Scarborough and other places and so could not sing to her after dinner; nor was he a very good singer either. She had dined alone, partaking with a good appetite of the "soup, smelts, cutlet, partridge, ice pudding and savory provided by her admirable cook," for it was her habit to be comfortable, and had gone out doors to the street, when immediately in front of the house she met Lena Swallow, the nurse, who was out of work.

It was now that the miracle occurred. There was some conversation between the two women. Mrs. Teversham-Dingle, whose baptismal name was Olive, was in doubt about helping Lena. She charged her with not being truthful. Thereupon Lena said: "You're like all the women in these highly respectable places. You've no imagination, and that is why you're so cruelly narrow minded. You think you are kind and good, but in many things you're as hard as nails." "I wish you good evening," said Olive. She turned back to the house, went up the steps and knocked on the door. At that moment her mind became a blank. When her senses returned she was aware of an amazing change in the situation. She stood in the street shabbily clad and looked up at herself on the top of the steps waiting for the door to be opened.

The story goes on very interestingly to tell what happened after this exchange of identities. It is a good deal more serious than "Vice Versa," particularly in places, but it has its amusing quality. Perhaps it is chargeable to the author and perhaps to the proof reader, but the book is full of trouble regarding "who" and "whom." At page 306 we find: "It was often in her mind to seek assistance from Jean Spiller, whom she knew full well would be only too grateful for the opportunity of assisting her." Again at page 374 we read of Olive's fear of "the man whom she knew was still dogging her footsteps," and at page 380 we hear Olive sighing with relief because "she had resolved not to drown; instead of committing the sin of self-destruction she would go to Spiller, whom she knew full well would extend the help of which she was in need." We have the same thing in many places; in no place, we think, has the chance been neglected to have it in this way.

There are other queer constructions. At page 293 it may be learned: "Forthwith had recommenced the heartbreaking search for a job, at which joined to her anxieties was the ever present fear of being again overtaken by illness." That is as queer as Dick's hatband—fear was joined to her anxieties and was at her search for a job. "But it's no use anticipating trouble before it comes"—so says Olive's friend Pansy at page 385.

The Substitute Star.

On the title page of her story "The House of Chance" (William Rickey and Company) Gertie De S. Wentworth-James quotes some lines which she calls an "Old Rhyme," but we do not think that they can be very old, because they speak of "pants." The first line runs, "Five little white mice of chance," and the second goes on, "Shirts of wool and corduroy pants." It does not sound old, and any way age could not improve it; the rhyme is bound to remain infamous in sensitive ears.

The story tells of a beautiful girl who had grown mortally weary of typewriting in an office in London. There was another girl who looked just like her. The other girl was a successful beauty of the stage, an American, who wished for a year's vacation. The typewriting girl stepped into the other's shoes, sang the other's songs, lived in the other's flat, wore the other's clothes, talked the other's slang in the other's drawl, received the other's sentimental friends, and did it all so well that for a long time nobody knew the difference. It might be thought that at the end of the year the substitute would be obliged to drop back into dull obscurity, but such was not the case. She conquered the heart of a man and married brilliantly. It was distinctly successful business all round.

There was one passage that we marked: "They started off [in an automobile] to skin through the knives of clear cutting northeast wind. But though the blades of Boreas knocked at their faces and their eyes and their lips, he left no scars behind except lovely splashes of red rose pink on the cheeks of Cecile Clare." We thought it a little too figurative.

Summer Fiction.

The very short stories that Mr. H. B. Marriott Watson has collected in "The Tomboy and Others" (John Lane Company) are only sketches, almost exercises in composition, but they are artistic and told with much delicacy. Some are amusing studies of the young girl about to blossom into the woman; more deal with one situation that is approached from many sides, namely, bringing a young woman to consent to what a man asks of her, from marriage to the sale of a kiss at a fair. Several verge on impropriety, according to the older British standards; for the conventions the young women are tempted to step over would present no difficulty in French or American fiction. The author seems to be practising the methods of the late Gustave Droz of playing with a rather skittish theme in the most decorous language. The sketches are so slight, however, that they can hardly be called stories and much is left to the reader's imagination.

Life in the Middle Ages has few attractions for Beryl Symons, who writes "The Roses of Crein" (Appletons). This is a romance of the crusade against the Albigenses, after the manner of the late G. P. R. James, and opens boldly with the advent of a solitary horseman. The author has gathered a mass of antiquarian information, more or less correct, about the period; she is fond of historic allusions that must often be puzzling to the average reader; she describes in great detail many unpleasant episodes, and particularly the sensuousness of church people and the oppression of the common man. The connecting link is the growing love of a haughty heiress for a gallant knight and troubadour who is her escort from one end of France to the other. Careful topography mitigates somewhat a flamboyant tale of a type that has gone out of style. There can be no doubt about the author's earnestness and desire to take pains, and she has lyrical power and the ability to deal with picturesque situations.

There are several entertaining Irish characters in E. R. Lipsett's "The House of a Thousand Welcomes" (John Lane Company) who will attract the reader to the simple love affair that is used as the thread for the story. The charming and capable heroine, the eccentric and unselfish doctor, the homesick pensioned soldier and the other immigrants from Ireland are all good. On the other hand the boarding house full of mismated American women is very wishywashy and the author's digressions into the condition of Ireland and the good and bad things in the United States are intolerably dull. Some pleasure may be derived from the book by judicious and liberal skipping.

Much information about Bermuda is mingled rather haphazard with the account of a heartless flirtation in "A Bermuda Lily," by Virginia W. Johnson (The A. S. Barnes Company, New York). The author unfortunately chooses to run a comparison with "The Tempest" into the ground, and while the heroine is unexceptionable, her Ferdinand is a contemptible specimen of the British officer, a "rotter," in modern parlance, and the substitutes for Prospero, Caliban and Ariel are far from satisfactory. We should have enjoyed more of the matter of fact Bermuda people, who have some semblance of reality. The author's tone is sentimental, both in her description and her tale. The story is no worse than most of those concocted to lend interest to summer or winter resorts.

In Mr. Max Pemberton's "Swords Reluctant" (G. W. Dillingham Company) we have another unfortunate specimen of contemporary journalism applied to fiction. The author makes use of the alleged atrocities in Macedonia, of the movement for universal peace and of the alarm over Britain's food supply, lumping them together with little care, and adding an item about the deviation of the Gulf Stream for good measure. As a result his story fails to interest, though in some episodes he shows remnants of his former skill, and his characters are lifeless puppets. If readable stories are to be constructed with such materials, and there is no reason why they should not, the authors must take some pains with them. This, it is clear, Mr. Pemberton has not done in this case.

Wood Carving.

Another attractive volume has been added to the handsome and valuable series of "The Connoisseur's Library," published by Methuen and Company and G. P. Putnam's Sons, in "Wood Sculpture," by Mr. Alfred Maskell. The author wisely hurries over the beginnings and restricts himself chiefly to the true centuries of art from the thirteenth to the sixteenth. His account of the German and the English wood carving, as is natural, is very complete; he touches more lightly on the French and the Italian, and perhaps gives less attention than he should to the Spanish carvings. The pictures are beautiful and well selected; they are real illustrations of the points to which the author wishes to call attention. Mr. Maskell seems to be particularly interested in the colored wooden images, the polychrome ornamentation, as he calls it, and covers that portion of his subject fully.

Other Books.

There must be a market for such books as Mr. Frank Hamel's "The Lady of Beauty" (Chapman and Hall; Brentano's), or else they could not be published, but it is hard to understand what class of readers can enjoy them. Their name is legion and they are mostly of British manufacture; big volumes of biographies of persons of minor historical importance, offering no new information, padding out the few facts known to be authentic with a lot of supposition, and illustrating the product with a few portraits. In telling the story of Agnes Sorel, the mistress of King Charles VII., Mr. Hamel does not go to the original sources; he has read the secondary authorities, which are unusually contradictory, but does not venture to decide between them; so he tells a bit of the story according to one and then takes it all back on the authority of another, filling in with much commonplace imaginary description and conversation of his own manufacture or that of others, who know as little about the matter as he does, according to his own statement. The result is 300 pages of confusion.

An instructive handbook for the amateur horticulturist is offered in very attractive form by Mr. Basil Hargrave in "A Year's Gardening" (T. Werner Laurie; Charles Scribner's Sons). First comes a calendar stating what jobs must be done every day in the year. Then follow directions about various kinds of gardens, including window plants, about lawns, fruit trees, berry bushes and pests, and a monthly calendar for the vegetable patch. At the end, taking up a third of the volume, is a descriptive list of flowers. The book is of British origin, so that American growers must make due allowances.

The title of Mary Hargrave's "Some German Women and Their Salons" (Brentano's) is misleading, for only two of the women she tries to describe held salons, Henrietta Herz and Rahel Varnhagen van Ense, and it is only of Rahel that she gives anything like a satisfactory account. The papers read like lectures delivered at a young ladies' boarding school, with most matters of interest left out. The women the author writes about, besides the two noted Jewesses, are Goethe's mother, that unbearable literary nuisance Bettina von Arnim, Queen Luise and two others. The effort to tell the story of Caroline Schlegel with the requisite propriety is almost ludicrous, while the reader will find himself at a loss as to why the forgotten Charlotte Stieglitz killed herself and why Jung Deutschland should have made a fuss over her.

A very thorough little monograph on the dogs called Russian wolfhounds, covering their history, development, uses in sport and as show dogs, has been written by Mr. Joseph B. Thomas with the title "Observations on Borzoi" (Houghton Mifflin Company). By putting his remarks in the shape of letters the author avoids formality, and is also enabled to include personal experiences and anecdotes that bear on the subject.

Whoever has dabbled, or has been tempted to dabble, in stock speculations will enjoy the bright essays which Mr. G. C. Selden has entitled "Psychology of the Stock Market" (Ticker Publishing Company), and will agree with much that he says in them. Like all good advice, however, we doubt whether it is likely to be followed in actual practice.

The long experience of Dr. Julius Sachs as head of a successful private school and as professor in the Teachers College, together with his thorough knowledge of foreign systems, gives unusual value to the suggestions and criticism he makes in "The American Secondary School" (Macmillans). The subject is of particular importance at a time when the whole matter of education in America, from the universities down to the kindergarten, is under suspicion.

Books Received.

"The Special Class for Backward Children." Lightner Witmer, Ph. D. (The Psychological Clinic Press, Philadelphia.)

"Scott's Quentin Durward." Edited by Thomas H. Briggs. (Henry Holt and Company.)

"A New System for Preventing Collisions at Sea." Sir Hiram S. Maxim. (Cassell and Company, New York.)

"Poems of the West." S. Gertsmon. (Richard G. Badger, Boston.)

"Charles Dickens as I Knew Him." George Dolby. (Charles Scribner's Sons.)

"The Human Factor in Works Management." James Harkness. (McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York.)

"A Man in the Open." Roger Pocock. (The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Indianapolis.)

"The Revenues of the Wicked." Walter Raymond. (E. P. Dutton and Company.)

"An Introduction to the History of Life Assurance." A. Fingland Jack. (P. S. King and Company; E. P. Dutton and Company.)

"Science of the Sea." Edited by G. Herbert Fowler. (E. P. Dutton and Company.)

"Of the Valley and the Sea." Fanny Purdy Palmer. (Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Company, London.)

"For and Against Experiments on Animals." Stephen Paget. (Paul B. Hoeber, New York.)

"Such Is Life." Frank Wedekind, translated by Francis J. Ziegler. (Brown Brothers, Philadelphia.)

The Coleridge-Wordsworth Partnership.

From the Westminster Gazette.

Coleridge thus explained his partnership with Wordsworth: "It was agreed that my efforts should be directed to persons and characters supernatural or at least romantic, yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment which constitutes poetic faith. Mr. Wordsworth, on the other hand, was to propose to himself as his object to give the charm of novelty to things of every day and to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural by awakening the mind's attention from the lethargy of custom and directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us."

Waterloo in Rhymes.

From the London Chronicle.

The battle of Waterloo, whose anniversary occurs to-day, has produced more verses than any other fight on record. Probably too no other battle name lends itself to such a variety of rhymes. Waterloo is a Flemish name. As pronounced by the Belgians it rhymes with "batter low," and before the name became Anglicized this pronunciation was current here. Crabbe makes Waterloo rhyme with "foe," but Byron, writing only a few months later, makes it rhyme with "true." A more ingenious rhyme appears in a Nottinghamshire dialect poem written during the Crimean war:

We'll feight 'em as we fought the French when we met at Waterloo;
We brogged 'em in the belly, and made 'em all go-ugh!

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